

REMARKS

In response to the rejections of several claims under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, amendments have been made to address each of the rejections. It is believed that these grounds of rejection of claims 1 – 12 have been overcome, as a result. In addition, other changes are being made to the claims to correct spelling errors, correct other instances of a lack of antecedent basis and eliminate unnecessary limitations. None of these amendments are believed to alter the scope of the claims. Reexamination of the amended claims for formal matters is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 4, 10 and 13 have been rejected over 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by the description in the present application of the MMC card as admitted prior art. It is respectfully submitted that this ground of rejection is not well taken. The claimed difference over the MMC card can be understood by comparing Figures 3 and 4 of the present application. Figure 3 shows the connection between the host and a plurality of prior MMC cards that uses a single command/status line connected to each of the card sockets. The rejected claims, on the other hand, define the system of Figure 4 wherein the single command line from the host is connected through the MUX to the card sockets in one of two operating modes. In the first operating mode, the host command line is connected to each of the card sockets, wherein the individual cards can then be operated by the host in the same manner as the MMC card. In the second operating mode, the host command line is connected to a selected one of the card sockets at a time so that the host can write a unique address to each card. There is nothing in the description of the MMC card that suggests this second operating mode.

This is much different technique than in the MMC card for loading addresses in each card. As described in the present application at page 3, lines 16 – 26, and page 10, lines 13 – 26, the MMC card includes circuitry to self-select one of the cards at a time to be in communication with the host for writing a unique system address in each card. In either case, the addresses loaded into the individual cards are then used by the host to connect with a single card at a time through a single command line. But the use of individually connectable command lines during the initialization phase to load individual addresses in the cards is much different than the MMC operation.

Each of the rejected independent claims 1, 10 and 13 recites this novel feature. In claim 1, commands are specified to normally be transferred to the cards over a command circuit connected to their sockets "except when unique addresses of the individual cards are being defined," in which case the command circuit is "alternatively connected to one of the plurality of sockets at a time." This is similarly expressed in the last paragraph (C) of claim 10, and the next-to-last paragraph (lines 18 – 21) of claim 13.

Examiner Interview

The undersigned attorney appreciates the telephone interview that Examiner Auve granted on June 2, 2003. The discussion involved primarily the undersigned attorney presenting the above-summarized distinction of claims 1, 10 and 13 over the MMC card system. Mr. Auve indicated during the interview that these claims should be allowable upon this position of patentability being summarized for the record, and their allowability was confirmed by a written Interview Summary mailed June 4, 2003. A discussion was also had about the formal rejection of claim 10, and the amendments to allowed claims 16 and 20 to eliminate an unnecessary limitation from each.

New Claims 24 - 32

Independent claims 24 (memory card) and 27 (method), plus several dependent claims, are being added. Method claim 27 is similar to allowed method claim 5 but using some different terms and having a somewhat different scope. Memory card claim 24 is an apparatus counterpart to claim 27, expressed similarly to allowed claim 16 but in different scope and with some different terms used. Each of the new claims is directed to the use of a variable number of memory contacts for the transfer of data into and out of the re-writable non-volatile memory within the card.

Information Disclosure Statements

A Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement was filed on April 8, 2003, the same day as the mailing of the Office Action. Consideration of the reference cited (U.S. patent publication no. 2001/0009505) and making it of record in this application are requested.

In addition, a further Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement (Supplemental IDS) is being filed herewith in part to cite U.S. patent no. 6,279,114 granted from an application referenced at page 2 of the present patent application. The specification is being amended to add this patent number.

Also included in the Supplemental IDS is a document "SD Memory Card Simplified Specifications, Part 1, Physical Layer Specification, Version 0.96," carrying a date of January 2000, that was prepared for unrestricted public distribution but the extent and timing of any such distribution are not known. This is a simplified version of a complete physical layer specification for the SD memory card, a later complete version entitled "SD Memory Card Specifications, Part 1, Physical Layer Specification, Version 1.0" dated March 22, 2000. As can be seen from the Simplified Specification being filed herewith, it omits certain chapters of the March 2000 complete specification. A Declaration of Applicants under 37 C.F.R. § 132 is being filed herewith to explain the preparation of these specifications and their relation to the subject matter being claimed in the present application. Specifically, paragraph 6 of the Declaration unequivocally states that the descriptions in these SD card specifications of the subject matter claimed in the present application are descriptions of their inventions.

The Specification of March 2000 and updating Supplementary Notes dated June 2000 are not included in the accompanying Supplemental IDS. Rather, since these documents were prepared by the SD Group for distribution in confidence to companies joining the SD Card Association and continue to be licensed to such companies as trade secrets, they are being separately submitted in confidence for review and consideration by the Examiner under the provisions of Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (M.P.E.P.) § 724.

Conclusion

Accordingly, it is believed that this application is now in condition for allowance and an early indication of its allowance is solicited. However, if the Examiner has any further matters that need to be resolved, a telephone call to the undersigned attorney would be appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,



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